

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ADDIS 04962 131752Z

51

ACTION AF-04

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O R 131528Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8495

INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISICIO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4962

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS ET US

SUBJ: PRIMIN'S REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: ADDIS 4110 PARA 5

1. POL COUNSELOR AND I HAD NINETY MINUTE MEETING MORNING APRIL 13 WITH PRIMIN, FONMIN, AND KIFLE WODAJO, NOW MIN IN PRIFMIN'S OFFICE. ATMOSPHERE WAS VERY FRIENDLY. SESSION HELD IN PRIMIN'S RESIDENCE "SO THAT PRESS WILL NOT GET IMPRESSION WE ARE COOKING SOMETHING SPECIAL". THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES SUBJECTS COVERED; DETIALS FOLLOW IN SEPTELS.

2. WITH REQUEST THAT THEIR REMARKS BE BROUGHT TO ATTENTION OF THE SECRETARY, PRIMIN/FONMIN/KIFLE MADE STRONG AND ELOQUENT PRESENTATION URGING EMERGENCY AND IMMEDAITE MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN VAST QUANTITIES FOR ETHIOPIA. IN ADDITION TO ARGUMENTS ALREADY FAMILIAR TO THE DEPARTMENT, THEY ADDUCED SEVERAL ADDITIONAL
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ADDIS 04962 131752Z

CONSIDERATIONS:

A. THEY FEAR THAT SOMALIA'S LEADERS WILL CONCLUDE THAT NEAR FUTURE IS BEST TIME TO ATTACK ETHIOPIA BECAUSE OF ITS CURRENT POLITICAL FLUX.

B. IT IS OMINOUS THAT SOMALIA HAS ALREADY STEPED UP ITS PROBES AND PROVOCATIONS, INCLUDING SURVEILLANCE FLIGHTS AS FAR INTO ETHIOPIA AS KEY MILITARY BASE OF JIJIGGA.

C. SOVIETS ARE PROMOTING RADICAL MOVEMENTS IN ETHIOPIA AND RESPOND TO IEG REQUESTS FOR CURBS ON ARMS DELIVERIES TO SOMALIA BE DEMANDING THAT ETHIOPIA ABANDON ITS "PRO-AMERICAN" POLICIES AND, INTER ALIA, PERMIT LARGE NUMBER OF SOVIET/CONSULAR OFFICES IN ETHIOPIA.

D. PRIMIN BELIEVES THAT IT IS VERY MUCH IN US BILATERAL AND REGIONAL INTEREST THAT HIS CABINET SUCCEED IN ITS EFFORTS TO MANAGE ETHIOPIA'S CURRENT TRANSITION IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO PREVENT BREAKUP OF EMPIRE AND ACCESSION OF RADICAL REGIME TO POWER. IF SOVIET-SUPPORTED GSDR CONVINCED THAT ETHIOPIA'S MILITARY IMPOTENCE AND ITS DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES COMBINE INTO A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR SUCCESSFUL SOMALI MILITARY INITIATIVE NOW, THE INITIAL SUCCESS OF SUCH AN ATTACK WOULD TOPPLE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. ITS SUCCESSOR WOULD BE A FAR MORE RADICAL ONE WHICH WOULD BLAME US FOR ETHIOPIA'S DEFEAT AND WOULD PROBABLY PURUSE A PRO-SOVIET POLICY.

E. THE WHOLE WORLD KNOW WHO BACKS ETHIOPIA AND WHO BACKS SOMALIA. MANY COUNTRIES WILL DRAW CONCLUSIONS DAMAGING TO US IF SOMALIA ATTACKS ETHIOPIA AND TOPPLES GOVERNEMNT. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD, FOR EXAMPLE, DEEPLY AFFECT POLITICAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SUDAN, AS FONMIN MANSOUR KHALID HAS AS MUCH AS SAID RECENTLY TO DR MENASSIE.

3. PRIMIN SAID HE HAD DECICDED SEND KIFLE BACK TO WASHINTON ABOUT APRIL 16 TO PRESENT CASE TO SECSTATE ALONG ABOVE LINES AND PREPARE FOR FONMIN VISIT IN

MID-MAY. ADDITIONAL EXPERTS WILL RECEDE FONMIN IN
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PAGE 03 ADDIS 04962 131752Z

INTERIM IF THIS USEFUL. FOCUS WOULD BE ON NEED FOR VAST INCREASE IN DELIVERIES OF DEFENSIVE MATERIEL TO BE PROCURED ON GRANT OR CREDIT BASIS WITH MINIMUM BUREAUCRATIC PROCESSING. EMERGENCY SHORT CUTS ESSENTIAL AS ETHIOPIA'S MILITARY POSTURE CONTINUES TO ERODE. FOR EXAMPLE, SAMS NOW BEING INSTALLED IN SOMALIA. ETHIOPIA'S LONG CRITICAL MILITARY SITUATION HAS DETERIORATED TO POINT WHERE, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF DOMESTIC TRANSITION STRESSES,

RESTORATION OF SOME MILITARY DETERRENCE IS "MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH."

4. IN RESPONDING I REFERRED TO VISIT HERE THIS WEEK OF AMB KIRK FROM MOGADISCIO AND OPINION VIEW HE HAD EXPRESSED TO US THAT SOMALI NOT LIKELY TO CONSIDER ATTACKING ETHIOPIA IN PRESENT PERIOD UNLESS SIGNS OF ORGANIZATIONAL BREAKDOWN BECOME FAR MORE DRAMATIC THAN IS CURRENTLY THE CASE. I ALSO MENTIONED AMB KIRK'S VIEW THAT SOMALI ARMY SUFFERS FROM VERY SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES IN MAINTENANCE AND LOGISITICAL SUPPORT. WHILE EXPRESSING UNDERSTANDING FOR SEVERAL ARGUMENTS ADVANCED, I POINTED OUT THAT FONMIN IN PARTICULAR WAS THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR FROM PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS WITH GREAT DIFFICULTIES USG HAD BEEN HAVING IN PROVIDING LEVEL OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE CURRENTLY AUTHORIZED FOR FY 74. I MENTIONED THAT DEPARTMENT HAD ADVISED ME WHEN DISCUSSING FONMIN'S FORTHCOMIG VISIT TO WASHINGTON NOT REPEAT NOT TO GIVE IMPRESSION THAT USG WILL BE IN POSITION TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE AT LEVELS IN EXCESS OF WHAT IT IS CURRENTLY PROVIDING. I SAID THAT AS KIFLE AND FONMIN WOULD BE WELCOME, HOWEVER, AND THAT I FELT SURE SECSTATE WOULD RECEIVE PRIMIN'S VIEWS ON SITUATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS WITH INTEREST.

5. I THEN RAISED SUBJECTS OF TENNECO FIVE NOW HELD BY ELF INSURGENTS AND OF RECENT ATTACK ON US FACILITY IN ASMARA, ELICITING FROM PRIMIN ASSURANCES OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S READINESS AND DESIRE TO COOPERATE IN DIRECTION I URGED. I ALSO SPOKE OF DROUGHT RELIEF, PORT CONGESTION PROBLEM. SEPTELS FOLLOW ON THESE SUBJECTS AND ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE REQUEST. COMMENT: I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THIS PRESENTATION WAS A CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 ADDIS 04962 131752Z

SINCERE ONE, PARTICULARLY SINCE THERE IS CERAINLY A GREAT DISPARITY BETWEEN THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF SOMALIA'S MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND THAT WHICH ETHIOPIA POSSESSES IN THE OGADEN.
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